

BRIEFING NOTES

November 7, 2005

5 p.m.

1. Earlier today, I welcomed a new class of cadets to the Mississippi Highway Patrol's Trooper School at the Mississippi Law Enforcement Academy in Pearl. It's a rigorous, 20-week program designed to put greater numbers of highly-trained law enforcement officers in the field to protect the public, and to respond to emergencies and disasters like the one we're recovering from now.

Such training does not happen automatically. I am pleased to tell you the program now under way resulted from new budget priorities I put in place since becoming governor. Working with the Legislature and with the dynamic leadership of Commissioner George Phillips at the Department of Public Safety, we're putting more law officers on the streets even at a time when the number of non-teacher state employees has dropped to just over 31,200 – the lowest number since 1999.

It is essential that we continue to prioritize the functions of state government as we move into another budget cycle where available funding will be stretched, and stretched, and stretched again. This message must not be lost as we continue to rebuild Mississippi.

2. On the Katrina front, I will be meeting in Washington this week with Don Powell, who was selected by President Bush as the Administration's main point of contact for Katrina recovery issues.
3. FEMA announced today that 115 Mississippi businesses have been awarded more than \$235 million in disaster-related contracts.

Federal officials continue to believe, as I do, that Mississippi businesses, particularly small and minority business owners, are very capable of providing products and services needed during the Hurricane Katrina recovery, and must be included. I was particularly interested to note:

- At the direction of FEMA, the General Services Administration (GSA), through a partnership with the Mississippi Contract Procurement Center, bought \$55 million worth of travel trailers from Mississippi small businesses for FEMA's temporary housing program. GSA also awarded 46 contracts worth \$42.8 million to small businesses in Mississippi for various disaster support efforts.
- Before Katrina made landfall, at the direction of FEMA, GSA awarded Mississippi companies:
 - o 58 contracts to 21 small businesses for more than \$81.6 million; and 34 contracts to 12 large businesses for nearly \$26.5 million.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in support of FEMA, on September 16 awarded a competitive bid fixed-price contract to AshBritt, Inc. for up to \$500 million for debris removal in Mississippi. In accordance with the Stafford Act, AshBritt is to give preference to organizations, firms or individuals residing or doing business primarily in the area affected by Hurricane Katrina.

- o The contractor must make good faith efforts to include small businesses, service-disabled veterans, small Historically Underutilized Business concerns, small disadvantaged businesses, and woman-owned small businesses in its subcontracts.
 - o Of the money paid to subcontractors to date, 61 percent has gone to Mississippi firms. A further breakout shows 60 percent of total payments have gone to small businesses, 30 percent to Historically Underutilized Business zone firms, and 14 percent to small disadvantaged businesses.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance Program has approved 1,969 loan applications totaling more than \$141.7 million to date for homeowners, renters, and business owners.

Because the recovery will be funded over several years, Mississippi businesses are encouraged to pursue all opportunities to play a role in the recovery process. Interested contractors and vendors should call the Mississippi Small Business Development Center at 1-662-915-5001, toll free in Mississippi 1-800-725-7232, or e-mail the center at msbdc@olemiss.edu.

Vendors seeking to provide services or products to federal recovery agencies should contact the Mississippi Contract Procurement Center (MSCPC) at www.msipc.com or call 1-800-222-6362.

4. Hurricane Katrina created more than 42 million cubic yards of debris in Mississippi, of which more than 17 million cubic yards have been removed as of Nov. 4. After working for two months to remove debris, estimates are the job is 42 percent complete, and at that rate it will six months to remove everything.

5. Q & A

